

## **A QUIET PLACE (2018)**

- Released US April 6, 2018
- 95 minutes
- \$17 million Budget
- Directed by John Krasinski
- Written by Woods, Beck and Krasinski
- Platinum Dunes, Sunday Night
- Rated PG-13 for terror and some bloody images

## **QUICK THOUGHTS**

- Marisa Serafini
- Phil Svitek
- Demetri Panos

## **DEVELOPMENT**

- Paramount Pictures bought their spec script in March 2017
- Initially, the writers had considered developing the film into being a *Cloverfield* installment, but after pitching their ideas to the studio collectively all of those involved decided to keep the film as its own entity
- Paramount had a relationship with John Krasinski, having worked with him on Michael Bay's 13 Hours, and on the new show Jack Ryan
- Krasinski read the spec script from Woods and Beck in July 2016

## **WRITING** (Story by Bryan Woods, Scott Beck; screenplay by Woods, Beck and John Krasinski)

- Beck and Woods began working on the story in 2013
  - They grew up together in Iowa and in college had watched numerous silent films
  - used their experience growing up close to farmland as the basis for the story, also including a grain silo setting as a place considered dangerous in their upbringing
- In January 2016, Beck and Woods began writing *A Quiet Place* in earnest
- Krasinski cited cinematic influences including *Alien*, *No Country for Old Men*, and *In the Bedroom* when writing a new draft
- Krasinski also cited *Jaws* (1975) as an influence with how the protagonist cop moved from New York to an island to avoid scary situations and was forced to encounter one in his new location with shark attacks
- Bryan Woods and Scott Beck's original screenplay only contained one line of dialogue
  - Their screenplay was named one of the ten best scripts of the year on Tracking Board's 2017 Hit List, an annual list voted on by industry professionals
- "A lot of the work that [Krasinski] did on the screenplay was just making it more personal to his experience." -Woods

## **STORY/TOPICS**

- In the year 2020, most of Earth's human population has been wiped out by a race of sightless creatures with incredible hearing ability — which they use to hunt their prey with pinpoint accuracy
- The Abbott family — husband Lee, wife Evelyn, sons Marcus and Beau, and deaf daughter Regan — scavenge for supplies while communicating non-verbally through Sign Language
- Beau is playing with a toy space shuttle, warning him that its noise could attract the creatures, Lee takes it from him. However, Regan returns the toy to Beau. On their way home, Beau turns the toy on and attracts one of the creatures, resulting in his death
- A year later, the family are living on their farm, and Evelyn is in the final stages of pregnancy.
- Lee repairs Regan's cochlear implant, but the device fails to restore her hearing. Regan, still struggling with the guilt of her brother's death, becomes bitter and tells her father to stop trying to help her deafness.
- Later, Lee takes Marcus to a nearby river to teach him to fish despite Regan begging to go instead. Dejected, she goes off on her own to visit Beau's grave and stays there until nightfall.
- Lee explains to Marcus that they will always be safe from the creatures so long as louder sounds mask their own audible movements
- Meanwhile, Evelyn goes into labor. While making her way to the basement, she steps on a nail. In agony, she accidentally drops a glass picture frame, alerting one of the nearby creatures.
- Evelyn warns Lee and Marcus of danger by flipping a switch that changes the house's lights from white to red, while struggling to remain silent during contractions.
- Arriving at the farm and seeing the lights, Lee instructs Marcus to create a diversion while Lee runs to find Evelyn. He finds her hiding in the bathroom with their newborn son and narrowly avoids another attack while carrying them to the soundproof basement he has constructed for the baby.
- Evelyn begs Lee to find the children in the cornfield and he obeys.
- After falling asleep, Evelyn wakes up to discover that the basement is flooded with water from a leaking pipe, and one of the creatures is pursuing them.
- Regan hurries back to the farm. She and Marcus take refuge atop a fallen grain silo, lighting a fire to alert their father to their whereabouts. A hatch door gives way and Marcus falls into the silo, sinking into the corn, nearly suffocating before Regan jumps in and saves him. They avoid further danger by clinging to the fallen silo door and survive a subsequent creature attack by hiding under it.
- Regan's repaired cochlear implant reacts to the proximity of the creature by emitting a piercingly loud high-frequency sound that drives the creature off. The children escape from the silo and reunite with Lee.
- The creature returns and Lee attacks it with an axe-like tool while Marcus and Regan hide in a pickup truck. Lee is wounded and Marcus inadvertently shouts, attracting the creature to the truck.
- Lee uses sign language to tell Regan and Marcus that he loves them before sacrificing himself to draw the creature away from his children. Regan and Marcus roll the truck down a hill to escape and reunite with Evelyn and the baby at the farmhouse.

- Regan, not having been allowed in the basement previously, sees her father's notes on the creatures and his experimentation with several different implants, as well as radio equipment and security camera monitors.
- When the creature returns to invade the basement, Regan places the boosted cochlear implant on a nearby microphone, magnifying the feedback to ward off the creature. Painfully disoriented, the creature exposes the flesh beneath its armored head, rendering itself vulnerable to a shotgun blast from Evelyn.
- The security monitors show two other creatures approaching. With their newly acquired knowledge of the creatures' weakness, Evelyn and the children prepare to fight back.

## THEMES

- Parental anxiety
- Sacrifice for family
- Challenges of communication
- "The themes of parenting and the difficulty of keeping children safe (in any world, let alone the one in the movie) are carefully woven throughout the story" -MovieGuide

## Use of American Sign Language (ASL)

- Since the characters communicate in American Sign Language to avoid making sound, filmmakers hired deaf mentor Douglas Ridloff to teach ASL to the actors and to be available to make corrections
- According to Simmonds, the way the characters used their sign language reflected their motivations; the father had short and brief signs that showed his survival mentality, while the mother had more expressive signs as part of her wanting her children to experience more than survival
- Simmonds said for a scene in which her character fights with her father in sign language, she suggested for the daughter to rebel rather than cower as in the script
- Simmonds also said the script originally had the father sign to his daughter "I love you", but she suggested for him to follow with "I've always loved you" to make up for their arguing earlier in the film
- Simmonds said of the need to practice ASL, "In the movie, we've been signing together for years and years. So it should look fluent"

## CAST:

### EMILY BLUNT (Evelyn Abbott)

- Plays Evelyn, the mother of Regan, Marcus and Beau and the wife of Lee
- She is a doctor and is pregnant with their fourth child at the start of the film
- Blunt is Krasinski's wife in the movie and in real life
- Known from *The Devil Wears Prada*, *The Five-Year Engagement*, *The Girl on the Train* and *Into the Woods*
- Blunt read Krasinski's draft and asked him if she could be cast opposite him in the film

- Krasinski describes Evelyn wanting to ensure their children "be fully-formed, fully-thinking people"
- Blunt stated, "We both realized how much our own life experience as a couple with children could be mirrored in this. So we could just bring an authenticity to this family that actually, in many ways as much as we had run away from the fact that we didn't want to work together, I think the fact that we're married lent itself to this particular film."
- Evelyn having a baby might seem like a ridiculous decision, but it's a deliberate one. Blunt beautifully communicates her longing to bring new life into the world with little more than a spoken word or two

### **JOHN KRASINSKI** (Lee Abbott)

- The father of Regan, Marcus and Beau, the husband of Evelyn
- Lee is an engineer
- Known from The Office, US TV show
  - Krasinski served as a producer and occasional director of the show
- Film credits include License to Wed, Leatherheads and It's Complicated
- Krasinski described his character as a survivalist who focuses on getting his family through each day
- "John Krasinski is simply phenomenal here. This so could have been an overwrought vanity exercise as we have seen before in countless films, but this not, he is perfectly cast in this role, and he really works as the father trying to do everything for his kids, for better or worse." -Brian MacNamara, TL;DR Movie Reviews
- Lee Abbot is "a sweaty, bearded survivalist whose love for his children asserts itself with devastating ferocity." -Justin Chang, LA Times

### **MILLICENT SIMMONDS** (Regan Abbott)

- Lee and Evelyn's deaf daughter
- She is deaf in real life and has been since infancy due to a medication overdose
- Known from *Wonderstruck*, her only other credit
- The filmmakers hired an ASL interpreter for her so spoken and signed language could be interpreted back and forth on set
- Simmonds helped teach her fellow actors to sign
- Simmonds' character was "a little bit of the warrior princess, the black sheep in the family" and that she used "signing that's very defiant, it's very teenage defiant" - Krasinski said
- Krasinski said he sought a deaf actress, "... for many reasons, I didn't want a non-deaf actress pretending to be deaf. Most importantly though, because a deaf actress would help my knowledge and my understanding of the situations tenfold. I wanted someone who lives it and who could teach me about it on set."
- Regan is coddled by her parents and not allowed to explore on her own because her deafness makes it harder to sense threat

## **NOAH JUPE** (Marcus Abbott)

- The hearing son of Lee and Evelyn, and Regan and Beau's brother
- Krasinski noticed Jupe in the 2016 miniseries *The Night Manager* and later got to see an early screening of the 2017 film *Suburbicon* to evaluate Jupe's performance
- Also known from the drama film *Wonder* and *The Man with the Iron Heart*
- On working with John and Emily: "I learned a lot from watching them as an actor," Jupe told Page Six. "You have to change things up to surprise yourself and take risks in the moment."
- Marcus is portrayed as nervous, sensitive and easily frightened
- Marcus is content to spend his time in the family's basement, but his parents want him to learn to take care of himself

## **TRIVIA**

- The opening sequence was the last to be shot, as it required John Krasinski to shave most of his beard
- John Krasinski played the monster in a motion capture suit for a few scenes
- Krasinski and Blunt have been married 8 years and have 2 children
- Some of the family photos in the movie are actually real-life photos of their family. It was meant to add a sense of authenticity, according to BuzzFeed
- Fans have noticed a similarity between 'The Office' and *A Quiet Place*. Krasinski's and Blunt's characters share a pair of headphones to listen to music only they can hear. It's a possible tribute to the same scene from "The Office" featuring Jim (Krasinski) and Pam.
- Moviegoers soon discovered how very silent the film was. In the theater you can hear every bite of popcorn, cough, crunch of a candy wrapper, etc.
- Some tactics the family uses in the movie to remain quiet are walking barefoot, communicating via sign language and playing Monopoly with cotton game pieces
- There are only seven people on screen for the entire film, the only ones outside the family being an unidentified man and woman seen in the woods

## **DIRECTING** John Krasinski

- Krasinski joined later as director and wrote a new draft of the script originally by Beck and Woods
- it appealed to him with the concept of parents protecting their children, especially since he and his wife, actress Emily Blunt, had had their second child at the time
  - Blunt encouraged him to direct the film
- This was his third directorial credit and his first for a major studio
- Speaking of the various political and social commentary the film encouraged, John Krasinski said, "The best compliment you can get on any movie is that it starts a conversation. The fact that people are leaving and talking about anything is really fun—but certainly about deep stuff like that, is awesome

## **PRODUCTION** (Michael Bay, Andrew Form, Brad Fuller)

- Production Companies: Platinum Dunes (Michael Bay's company) and Sunday Night
- Distributed by Paramount Pictures
- Production took place from May to November 2017 in Dutchess and Ulster counties in upstate New York
  - Some filming took place on a soundstage in the town of Pawling in Dutchess County as well as on-location in the county's city of Beacon
- Filming also took place on Main Street in Little Falls in Herkimer County, New York
- Filmmakers spent their budget locally, including a purchase of 20 tons of corn which they hired local farmers to grow
- The crew had to be completely silent on set since Krasinski wanted to record real sounds from where they filmed

### **CINEMATOGRAPHY** (Charlotte Bruus Christensen)

- Producers Andrew Form and Bradley Fuller said they initially planned not to provide on-screen subtitles for sign-language dialogue with "context clues" but realized that for the scene in which the deaf daughter and her hearing father argue about the modified hearing aid, subtitles were necessary
  - They subsequently added subtitles for all sign-language dialogue in the film
- "Krasinski smartly realizes that such a story should be largely told in close-up, to emphasize not only the fear of the situation, but also the intimate bonds keeping this unit together. Every micro-expression—a wrinkled forehead, a darting glance—matters when people aren't able to speak aloud to each other." -David Sims, The Atlantic
- "This is not one of those films that mistakes shaky camerawork for horror storytelling. It's got a refined visual language that plays beautifully with perspective and the terrifying nature of a world in which we can't yell to warn" -Brian Tallerico, RogerEbert.com

### **EDITING/VFX** (Christopher Tellefsen)

- Production designer Jeffrey Beecroft headed the creature design, and special effects supervisor Scott Farrar created the creatures
- Krasinski wanted the creature to look like they had evolved to no longer need eyes and to be "somewhat humanoid" in nature
- the initial creature design showed them with rhinoceros-like horns out of their faces, but it underwent a redesign
- *Vanity Fair* reported that the team used "prehistoric fish, black snakes, and bats, particularly their movement patterns" as reference. Inspiration was also drawn from bog people: cadavers that have been mummified in peat, turning the skin black and giving it a sagging, leathery look

### **SOUND/MUSIC** (Marco Beltrami)

- During filming, the crew avoided making noise so diegetic background sounds(e.g., the sound of rolling dice on a game board) could be recorded
  - These sounds were amplified in post-production

- A traditional musical score was also added to the film, which Krasinski justified for audiences to remain familiar with watching the film and not feel like being part of a "silence experiment"
- For scenes from the perspective of the deaf daughter, sound was removed to put greater focus on the visual
- Beltrami provided the sound editors music to work with in a way that would not interfere with the sound design throughout the film
- In the film, creatures are blind and communicate through clicking sounds. Aadahl and Van der Ryn (supervising sound editors) said they were inspired by animal echolocation
- The sound of feedback, normally avoided by sound editors, was woven into the story at a loudness level that would not bother audiences too much
- Sound editors worked to create what they called "sound envelopes," putting audiences in a character's shoes to hear what they hear and how they might hear it.
  - The most intriguing one was for Regan. Her cochlear implant gives her minimal hearing; she has more of a physical sense of presence than an auditory one
  - For that, the editors wanted to mimic the feeling of being in an anechoic chamber, a room that absorbs sound to the point where all you can hear are the heightened noises of your own body
- The sound of feedback, like the kind at a concert when a microphone gets too close to the amplifier, is woven into the narrative. Its unpleasantness is something sound editors usually try to avoid, so it became a particular challenge to include.
- "In a strange way silence is more terrifying than any sound you can put in there. It's really unsettling." -Erik Aadahl

## PROMOTION

- March 9, 2018 premiered at SXSW as the opening-night film
  - It was selected from 2,458 submission
- Paramount Pictures released the first trailer for *A Quiet Place* in November 2017
- It aired a 30-second commercial for the film during the Super Bowl LII on February 4, 2018
  - Of the seven trailers that aired during the playoff, *A Quiet Place* and *Red Sparrow* aired during the pregame and had the lowest views and social conversations
- February 12, 2018, Krasinski appeared on The Ellen DeGeneres Show to present the full trailer for *A Quiet Place*
- Following its premiere at SXSW, the film experienced social media growth to under 52 million views across multiple platforms, outpacing *Get Out* (2017), which had 46.9 million views
- *The Tracking Board* reported on March 14, "The stellar reviews out of SXSW, coupled with the fact that there isn't anything like it in the marketplace, should help it stand out among its bigger-budget competition."

- Tagline 1: "If they hear you, they hunt you."
- Tagline 2: "Rule #1: Don't make a sound. Rule #2: Never leave the path. Rule #3: Red means run."

## BOX OFFICE

- Paramount Pictures released *A Quiet Place* in 3,508 theaters in the United States and Canada on April 6, 2018
- As of April 10, 2018, the film has grossed \$59.7 million in the United States and Canada, and \$25.7 million in other territories
  - Worldwide total gross of \$85.4 million, as of 4/10/18
- The film made \$19 million on its first day (including \$4.3 million from Thursday night previews at 2,750 theaters)
- Unlike most horror films which are front-loaded on Friday and suffer drops the rest of the weekend, *A Quiet Place* made \$19.1 million on Saturday
- Debuted to \$50.2 million, topping the box office and marking the biggest opening for a Paramount film since *Star Trek Beyond* in July 2016
- It was second biggest domestic debut of 2018 behind *Black Panther*

## RECEPTION

- RT: Approval rating of 96% based on 216 reviews, and an average rating of 8.2/10
  - The website's critical consensus reads, "*A Quiet Place* artfully plays on elemental fears with a ruthlessly intelligent creature feature that's as original as it is scary—and establishes director John Krasinski as a rising talent." -RT
- IMDB: 8.2/10
- Cinemascore: Audiences polled by CinemaScore gave the film an average grade of "B+" on an A+ to F scale
- On Metacritic, the film has a weighted average score of 82 out of 100, based on 51 critics, indicating "universal acclaim"
- Writing for *Rolling Stone*, Peter Travers gave the film 3.5 out of 4 stars, saying, "The question Krasinski tackles is what defines a family and what's needed to preserve it? 'Who are we,' asks Mom, 'if we can't protect our children?' The answers are worked out with satisfying complexity and genuine feeling, proving indeed that home is where family is. This new horror classic will fry your nerves to a frazzle."
- *The Hollywood Reporter's* John DeFore described the film as "a terrifying thriller with a surprisingly warm heart"
- Michael Phillips of the *Chicago Tribune*, one of the few that were less than impressed with the film, gave it 2.5 out of 4 stars and said, "I don't know if I'd call *A Quiet Place* enjoyable; it's more grueling than cathartic."
- Tatiana Tenreiro, writing for *Bustle*, said while *A Quiet Place* was not a silent film, "It is the first of its kind within the modern horror genre for how little spoken dialogue it actually has." She said the rare moments of spoken dialogue "give depth to this horror movie, showing how the narrative defies the genre's traditional films even further"



- “A Quiet Place” is both stirringly thoughtful and remarkably entertaining. It feels in a lot of ways like the perfect horror movie — a brilliant concept worked into a stunningly intense film, and a horror flick with heart, no less... It’s a horror-tinged adrenaline syringe to the heart. A shock of terror-soaked, emotion-fueled horror filmmaking that will leave the genre indelibly changed.” -Chris Forrester, IDS News
- “A QUIET PLACE is an extraordinary piece of work. Terrific acting, but the main thing is the SILENCE, and how it makes the camera's eye open wide in a way few movies manage.” Stephen King, via Twitter